

BACCHUS

WINE TO-DAY & TO-MORROW

P. MORTON SHAND

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this Series will be found
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OR

WINE TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

BY

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etc.

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OR

WINE TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

“ Put a cup of wine into my hand that I may cast off from me the cloak of hypocrisy.”—HAFIZ.

THE bush which none but the poorest wine ever needed has been hung out alluringly as a tavern's thirst-provoking sign-board to entice the pleasure-seekers of those lands where the grape will not, or may not, ripen for the wine-press, over all wines good and bad, true and false, provided only they be duly intoxicating, by that hysterical piece of amateur legislation known as the Volstead Act. Every people, we know, has the government and laws it deserves. It is only when the citizens of a state are so overcome by enthusiasm for the perfection of their own institutions as to organise propaganda for the conversion of other countries to conformity with the sovereign panaceas they have invented, as in the case of Soviet Russia or the republic which recently substituted a camel

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rampant and three golden orbs for an eagle as its national emblem, that the domestic policy of such a state ceases to be exclusively its own concern. Not that respect for its privacy is desired by either nation : the one broadcasts its sanguinary social reforms, the other its strident social vulgarities. The war that was to end war was also to end wine. The crusaders of the United States, too proud to fight for any other cause, were to make the world as safe for teetotalism as for democracy, so that for the Utopian future the latter shibboleth should imply the former. The Latin nations, however, were deaf to all material inducements, such as increased industrial efficiency, and obstinately refused to have the "running sore" of viticulture cauterised by the same Fiery Cross as had desiccated California's wine-grapes into seedless raisins. Ultimately, America, still inspired by the loftiest moral motives, consented to forgo the forcible conversion of Europe to the one generally known commandment of the Koran in exchange for an enormous monetary tribute to indemnify its bankers and munition-manufacturers for the grievous losses in ethical prestige which they had sustained by this unparalleled act of renunciation.

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Thanks to the magnificent advertisement given to the inimitable properties of wine by the School-Marms Government which imposed Prohibition on a nation ever whoring after righteousness, its future existence may be deemed assured until the next Puritan revival, or the advent of the New Matriarchy. In spite of the fact that their aims are championed by a titled lady, who, though British neither by birth nor blood, was, appropriately enough, the first woman Member of Parliament to take her seat at Westminster, our "Temperance Reformers" are no more likely to catch us unawares in the course of the next few decades than those other eugenic despots, the vegetarians and the anti-tobacco fanatics. Humanity reacts swiftly and brutally against Puritanism in any form. Every lenten cycle of Praise-God-Bare-Bones theocracy is invariably followed by the reign of a Merry Monarch, if not of a Heliogabalus. In few ages of the past has the will to deny itself no single pleasure of the flesh been more manifest in mankind than in the vandal and hedonist era of transition in which we crudely live.

For a moment it seemed that the "to be, or not to be" of wine-drinking might

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threaten to become a permanent and burning political question among non-viticultural nations, just as certain practical problems of wine-growing have for long been the paramount agricultural-political issues in viticultural countries. Already, however, the tide of an inevitable revolt against tyrannically "uplifting," but quite unworkable, enactments has swept over Scandinavia, the nursery of all "progressive" movements. Soviet Russia, which began by abolishing Vodka in favour of a tolerance of light wines and beer, has been constrained to add distillation to other nationalised industries on the cynical pretext that the state needs additional revenue only to be found in exploiting drunkenness. Forewarned, as much by the gruesome Bacchanalia of Prohibition in operation as by the quality of Bootleggers' "Hootch," British wine-drinkers are determined to fight to the last in defence of their liberties as their forefathers fought the Excisemen and the Revenue-Cutters before them. The Labour Party, theoretically committed to "an ambitious programme of temperance legislation" (including the back-door policy of Prohibition known as Local Option), dares not lift a finger to put its academic articles of faith into practice on

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pain of seeing the working class vote against it to a man. The only sign of alarm is in the trade, and can be discounted as a not altogether disinterested manœuvre. Nonconformity, the standard-bearer of Teetotalism, is as defunct as Liberalism, which has now won the right to replace " Brandy Nan " as the alternative proverbial metaphor for something as dead beyond recall as that extinct and fabulous bird the dodo.

Thus wine has now begun to acquire an added, and most unenviable, lustre for no better reason than that it used to be denounced by the zealots in their wrath as " a wile of Satan." By a biased application of the doctrine of Justification by Works, the Calvinists were able to find in wine, rather than in the unchanging heart of man, the source of that insidious " temptation " inseparable from every gradation of its use that lies between the equally " sinful " extremes of moderate digestive enjoyment at meals and the abuse provocative of delirium tremens. Indeed, no honest discrimination between natural wine or beer and fortified wine or spirits was ever made by these impassioned casuists. The drinkers of claret, stout, cider, port or proof gin, the men who would have felt themselves for ever

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dishonoured had they once exceeded the strictest sobriety, as the habitual drunkards, were one and all outlawed impartially as profligate "wine-bibbers." In parts of New England to say of a man that he "drank wine" constituted an inexpugnable gravamen against his character only comparable with accusing him of living in open adultery. It is worth noticing how it was only after mankind had refused to be any longer very much interested in dogmas one way or the other, and had ceased to damn or bless a neighbour off-hand for holding a certain selection of them, that the Puritan conscience began to envisage the possibility of preaching less purely doctrinal abnegations, such as "Taking the Pledge," to a considerably greater extent than had hitherto seemed consonant with the furtherance of "the Lord's Work." From that moment all biblical precepts endorsing the sanction of wine were as resolutely put aside as the love, pity and forgiveness of Christ's teachings had been by the original wine-drinking founder of these austere sects some three centuries before. Nor was their awakened interest in "Total Abstinence" due to any weak human compassion for the appalling effects of alcoholism in heredity, such as those

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infant maladies which are the direct results of "the sins of the fathers"—the hideous tenet of Predestination could be relied upon to eliminate any such motive—but simply and solely to the cold zest of robbing life of one more pleasant thing, one more "snare of the flesh."

The proper place for a man to drink wine, or even spirits, is in his own, or someone else's, home, among his family or friends, not in the nauseating atmosphere of a night-club, the squalor of a saloon-bar, or ensconced in a high-backed church pew, his eyes riveted on the text "Lord, give me strength," furtively draining it from a flask, so as to sustain the onslaught of those serried battalions of theological syllogisms which reinforce the "prayerfulness" of the average Scottish sermon. Indeed, it is probable that the peculiarly sordid type of our taverns is a direct result, even to some extent the expression, of that harsh Puritan condemnation of all "strong liquors." For long the Righteous consistently refused to co-operate in any movement designed to ameliorate the conditions, or curtail the licensing hours, of public houses on the pharisaical pretext that what was needed was their abolition pure and simple, the felling of the whole

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tree, not the lopping off of a rotten branch. No alliance, they declared, could be contemplated with those "Sons of Belial" and "workers of iniquity" who were striving in and out of Parliament, usually amidst general obloquy, to bring about sane temperance and render the inn a place which a self-respecting working-man might no longer be ashamed to frequent in company with his wife or sweetheart. Towards the end of the last century the intransigence of this attitude became sensibly modified. Many prominent Non-conformists quietly abandoned the practice, and even the profession, of teetotalism after reaching that degree of affluence which impelled them to forsake the "true word" of the little Bethels for the flesh-pots of the parish church. None the less the outbreak of the War found many of the more uncompromising Puritans exulting in their Bands of Hope, because a golden opportunity was now presented of forcing total abstinence on the nation under cover of the specious argument that a sober man is able to make shells faster than a drunken, and a Blue-Ribbon soldier can kill far more of his foes in the Lord's name than one whose physique has been undermined by dalliance with the flower of the hop or the

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fruits of the vine and the juniper-bush. Now that the voice of the Unco' Guid no longer carries much weight in the nation's counsels, it is reasonably certain that the public-house, as we know it, will be profoundly changed for the better, both structurally and as regards its general ambiance. The lessons of direct state control at Carlisle, and the experiments with restricted licences and indirect regulation of the management so wisely instituted in some of garden suburbs and municipal housing-estates, have proved a valuable stimulus to the enlightenment of public opinion. Sooner or later, too, we shall learn that in spite of the grandmotherly assurances of County Councillors to the contrary, the drinking of a glass of beer in the open air at a table adjacent to the street pavement is no more bound to encourage immorality than when the same beverage is consumed between four walls.

Wine, then, if less of a necessity of life than it was for our forefathers, or even our immediate fathers, is strangely enough regarded to-day more as something of a luxury, or a minor depravity, than as a natural taste inherent in the human race. We have grown so accustomed to quoting the hackneyed and hypocritical "Wine

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and Women " in explanation of our neighbours' failings, that our smug and sniggering satisfaction makes us apt to forget " Song," or merriment, the third person of this ageless trinity, which ennobles the abdiction to both. The three together can transmute the foul fumes of the gin-palace and the defiling ignominy of the brothel into the genial fireside haven of a man's own home, offering the licit enjoyment of the wife of his bosom and the wine of his cellar. The abiding verity of Martin Luther's familiar couplet of *Gay Sçavoir*, "*Wer nicht liebt Wein, Weib, und Gesang, der bleibt ein Narr sein Leben lang*" has outlived all the rancorous interdictions of the misanthropic Calvin. Teetotalism and castration are analogous abnegations, just as drunkenness and vicarious venery are analogous abuses, of the purest carnal joys that are our earthly inheritance by the exercise of our own Free Will and God's good Grace of Election.

But if the more immediate future of wine, as that of meat and tobacco, may be considered assured, the same degree of confidence cannot be expressed in its permanent quality. Prohibition being temporarily eliminated as a potential menace, there remain three serious and growing

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dangers to the survival of wine in that state of purity and excellence in which it is now obtainable, though by no means necessarily always obtained. These are its mass-production ; its adulteration ; and its prostitution so as to flatter vulgar but expensive palates, or the exactions of clamant and rapidly expanding congeries of faddists—typified by the mania for rendering all wines sparkling on the one hand, and that contradiction in terms, dealcoholised wine, or pasteurised, non-alcoholic grape-juice, on the other. To these must be added the devastating epidemics to which the vine is peculiarly subject, such as the *Oidium* and the *Phylloxera*.

The first of these dangers, that of mass-production, is by far the gravest. The world's output of wine is steadily increasing, particularly in Australia, North and South Africa and South America, and to a less, but still perceptible, extent in Europe itself. Indeed, there might soon be enough to meet all potential demands of viticultural and non-viticultural countries alike, but for such factors as continually rising costs of production and freight, the increase of customs' barriers, the world's diminished purchasing power and the growing greed of middlemen. None the

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less, France, still the largest producer and consumer, though followed ever more closely by Italy, is forced to buy some millions of hectolitres annually from Algeria, Tunis, Spain, Italy and Greece in order to meet her domestic needs. Nor does she export in *vins fins* a quarter of what she imports in the form of common blending wines. The proportion of fine wines to ordinary wines grown in France is very small.

The more wine you grow from the same plot of land the poorer will be its quality. There is a strong temptation for the French peasant-proprietors of those regions where the most famous wines are grown to use the "*taille haute*" (the form of pruning which removes less of the young shoots year by year and so produces a larger number of bunches of grapes) instead of the traditional "*taille basse*" (which leaves the minimum amount of new wood on the pollarded vine, thereby entailing many fewer bunches of grapes, but the highest, because the most concentrated, quality in the wine). The incentive to ignore this, perhaps the most sacrosanct of all the honourable traditions of vine-dressing—a tradition which may be compared to the enormity of shooting foxes in England—is particularly strong

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in the Côte d'Or, where the demand is always out of all proportion to the supply. Another temptation for the *vigneron*, especially in the less-renowned viticultural districts, is to grow an excess of what are called "*plants communs*." Some, but not all, of these species are hybrid or ungrafted American vines ("*producteurs-directs*"), while others are the commonest but most prolific native vines ("*gros-producteurs*") grafted on to Phylloxera-resisting "*portes-greffes*" as in the case of the fine vines which produce the finer wines. The *producteurs-directs* have been planted in response to the insistent demand for more and cheaper wine that has arisen since the War.* They give an enormous return per hectare of a coarse, neutral sort of wine of a quality that can only be described as parlous, instead of the small yield of excellent wine furnished by one or other of the delicate "*plants nobles*," or blue-blooded vines, which are the pride of, and often peculiar to, each particular district. At present the

* The main reason is that predominantly cider- and beer-drinking Départements of the north and north-east have now become large consumers of wine : an appetite whetted by the much appreciated Army wine-ration, nicknamed "Pinard," during the long years of mobilisation.

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producteurs-directs, but not the *gros-producteurs*, are denied all right to a local name, or "*appellation d'origine*," wherever they may be planted. Notwithstanding, their growers, now a considerable body, are redoubling their efforts to obtain this coveted privilege on the plea that the quality of these wines is rapidly improving; and they may ultimately succeed for political reasons.

The world wants more and more wine, and always of the kinds it thinks the best. The vineyards of Bordeaux, Burgundy and the Rhine are already producing all but their maximum yield. Already, too, many plots of ground in these famous regions are under vines which, from the nature of their soil, their altitude or exposure, ought never to have been planted with them. The temptation to indulge in over-production is continually increasing. The average wine-drinker persists in asking for about ten names among wines, and will not look at anything else, however excellent and reasonable in price, because Mr Everyman has no longer much individual palate, and will not trust such as he has, but buys imitatively and gregariously as he buys most other things. There is not enough of these particular wines to go round;

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indeed there has not been enough for some decades past. Unfortunately, the public prefers to be bamboozled rather than have to exercise its own discrimination in choosing from amongst the immense variety of other growths, many of them admirable and a few superb, which the earth has to offer in addition to Bordeaux, Burgundy, Chablis, Sauternes, White Graves, Hock and Moselle among natural wines, and Port, Sherry and Madeira among fortified ones. In England we have grown so accustomed to cynical impertinences with "appellation of origin" that we are neither shocked nor surprised that bacon can be sold called "Danish Wiltshire," or that Canadian soft-soap should be described in commerce as "Cheddar Cheese." Thus we have no idea what indignation and contempt such titles as "Australian Burgundy," "Algerian Chablis," "Spanish Graves," "South African Hock," or the now happily defunct "Californian Moselle," excite among Frenchmen and Germans, for whom these preposterous and fraudulent titles are the taking of sacred names in vain. The following verses, taken from the ballad of Raoul Ponchon, called "*Bourgogne d'Australie*," which used to be popular in purely French

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cabarets—anyhow until the Australians showed their magnificent qualities as attacking troops by the side of their French brothers-in-arms—is a typical example of the burning resentment felt by the whole French people at what is to them an act of the most cynical piracy, almost the theft of an historic part of their national patrimony.

*“ Vous êtes par trop rigolos,
Australiens immenses !
Mettez bien dans vos ciboulots
Où règnent les démenes,
Qu'il n'est d'autre vin bourguignon
—Croyez-en un ivrogne—
Que celui que nous bourgognons
Aux coteaux de Bourgogne.
Et la Bourgogne, elle est ici,
Et non en Australie !*

*Il faut avoir un fier toupet
Pour mettre une étiquette
Semblable à votre vin suspect,
Véritable piquette !**

*Il n'est, chez nous, maigre pinard,†
Qui ne soit cent fois brave
Comme le vin le plus gaillard
De vos meilleures caves.*

* *Piquette* means sour, thin wine ; it is to wine what small-beer is to ale.

† See note to page 17.

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*Vous planteriez, ô Melbourneois !
Sur vos coteaux barbares,
Les plus fins de nos ceps gaulois,
Nos Pinots* les plus rares,*

*En vain ! Car à ces gaillards-là,
A ces vrais gentilshommes,
Il faut ce terroir de gala,
Dont, Dieu merci ! nous sommes."*

The future of the purity and authenticity of wine—for though wine is far better made to-day than it was fifty years ago, thanks chiefly to Pasteur, it is also far more skilfully doctored—is wrapped up in the question of how far it may be possible to afford as adequate legal protection for recognised territorial appellations of origin outside, as already exists inside, the frontiers of those states in which they are found. If an imitation "Burgundy," say Australian, really resembled true Burgundy, which it does not because it cannot, there would, perhaps, be less cause to deny its right to a stolen title. The same excuse might be proffered, though with an even smaller show of logic, if, apart from any question of resemblance, it was of an equal, or merely comparable, quality.

* See page 34. The Pinot was tried in Australia, but did not prove a success in such a hot and arid climate.

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The problem of to what extent the wines of other countries can be improved, above all in keeping qualities, without sacrificing their own individual characteristics, so as to make it possible to mention them in the same breath as the more famous growths of France and Germany, is an arduous, but, in the long run, not necessarily an insuperable one. Every year we are learning more about the natural history of the vine and the chemistry of wine.

It is useless for the wines of other countries to seek to imitate the essential flavours and other peculiarities of the most famous French and German wines to which they may most nearly approximate in colour or alcoholic strength as it would be for these French and German wines to seek to imitate their imitators. In the case of the commoner fortified wines of Portugal and Spain imitation of a kind is not altogether impossible owing to the very nature of their preparation by brandying the only partially fermented must. The imitation of one wine by another, it cannot be too strongly emphasised, is impossible by natural means. Though every red and white natural wine has something in common with all other natural red and white wines, no two

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growths ever really resemble each other, and rarely two vintages of one and the same growth.

That large tracts of the earth's surface are eminently suitable for viticulture, though still virginal of the vine, such as—excluding the British Empire for the moment—parts of central China and Morocco, and possibly Abyssinia and Arabia as well, to say nothing of those considerable regions of Asia Minor and the United States where it was formerly cultivated, there can be little doubt. Moreover, such countries as Southern Russia, the Balkan States, Greece, Persia, Japan and many of the South American republics are undoubtedly capable of a much larger production of wine than they actually grow. The trouble is that the vine, once planted in a strange land, takes many decades, if not centuries, before it begins to yield wine that has any real quality. A successful wine-growing industry cannot be created in much less than half a century. True, we are told by a certain Brother Benedictus in his "*Chronicques Vivaroises*," as Mrs G. B. Stern reminds us, that the "*belle ordonnance de seps, pères de gros savoureux raisins*" on the famed Hill of Hermitage, the juice of which is "*une rosée para-*

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disiaque” rather than mere man-made wine, was planted, pruned and tended ready for the vintage in a single night by a host of ex-vigneron angels (for all vigneron, the worthy monk assures us, go straight to heaven, just as no single miscreant of the ungodly company of water-drinkers has ever passed St Peter’s scrutiny at the Golden Gate), so that the grapes were hanging ripe to bursting from these “*vignes séraphiques*” on the morrow, waiting only on the poor, Saracen-hunted hermit, perishing of thirst, to pluck and press them. What an impious irony of fate that Hermitage should be one of the slowest wines to mature ! But this is, perhaps, rather an exceptional case even among legends concerning the origins of famous vineyards, most of which claim, with wearisome monotony, to have been planted by the pious legionaries of the benign Emperor Probus, by Charlemagne himself, or various unfamiliar though duly authenticated saints ; and raised to fame in the inexhaustible goblets of the *Vert Galant* or the immortal Rabelais. The vine thrives best and most luxuriantly and yields the largest, coarsest and most regular harvests in very hot, sub-tropical climates to which it is not indigenous and where it

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is often necessary to irrigate the vineyards. Only in comparatively cold regions, within measurable distance of the northern limit of the vine (an imaginary line passing approximately from Nantes, through Paris, Compiègne, Coblenz, Dresden, a little east of Prague, along the southern slopes of the Carpathians and to the north of the Crimea and Caucasus in Europe; bisecting Turkestan, Cashmere, the Chinese Province of Shantung and Central Japan in Asia; and running from south of Puget Sound, north of the Great Lakes and across part of Canada, to the Atlantic seaboard in the State of New York, on the American continent), and from soil long familiar with its roots, will the *Vitis Vinifera* yield a vintage of fine and delicate wine; and then only in very small quantities, with an infinity of painful labour, at great expense and seldom more than two or three times in a decade, if, indeed, so often. The world's most classic vineyards are planted on poor, stoney soil, often on rugged slopes, little suitable for other forms of cultivation.

The world, then, is threatened with the extinction of the few hallowed acres of its very finest and most renowned vineyards within a measurable space of time by the ever-growing threat of over-

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production—the inclusion not only of just those additional adjacent rods, poles and perches which past generations in their probity and wisdom resolutely refused to annex to them; but also of whole square miles of outlying meadowlands, arable plain or bleak and insufficiently sheltered hill-tops beyond their immediate limits—no less than by a menacing invasion of baser and insufficiently acclimatised sub-species of the parent vine.

Other perils besetting the continuity of the finer wines are the spread of the so-called Type-Wines, in the form of standardised qualities for certain districts (a development that originated in California where wine used to be grown, as long as it could be grown at all, from vineyards vast as cattle-ranches, equipped with all the typically American resources of plant and capital for dealing with vintages on a Ford scale of output), which is being steadily fostered by wine-growers' co-operatives in many parts of France, Italy and other wine-lands; and the wholesale manufacture by the large French wine-shippers of those vinous mixtures known as "*Monopoles*" and "*Marques Personnelles*."

TYPE-WINES

TYPE-WINES

The impulse that has called the Type-Wines into being was the necessity of finding some expedient that would enable the proprietors of the less famous growths of well-known regions to sell their wines remuneratively, which was becoming more and more difficult. There was also a strong desire on their part to profit by the recently established *appellations d'origine* for even the most lowly and inferior wines grown within these areas, and the ambition to compete in foreign markets with the cheap wines of countries such as Algeria and Australia, that are all of them inevitably Type-Wines, sold as often as not under the titles of one or other of the most famous viticultural regions of France (e.g., Algerian "Chablis" and South Australian "Hermitage"). True, these descriptions would be illegal in France and those countries which, under recent commercial treaties, now admit yearly quotas of French wines and thereby assure the authenticity of their appellations; but in England the International Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, which nominally secures respect for these same appellations in all signatory states, seems to be

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a dead letter, if indeed it was not still-born.

These Type-Wines, already familiar in France, are not easily explained without giving a concrete and somewhat detailed example. For many decades wines have been available in commerce which bore the names of one or other of the great subdivisions of the Bordelais, such as St Estèphe, Pauillac or Margaux in the Médoc, and Graves, St Emilion and Pomerol as representatives of the other districts entitled to be sold as "Bordeaux." It was notorious that these wines, which were not always genuine, differed enormously in quality according to the standing of the firms which selected them and the vintages to which they belonged : vintages that were often passed over in silence because the wines in question were a blend of two or more. Nevertheless, wines sold under these labels, that made no claim to have been grown on any territorially defined plot of ground within the borders of their several districts—a particular Château or Cru—represented the cheapest authentic, or putatively authentic, kinds of Bordeaux with which the general public was familiar. The Co-operative Movement among French wine-growers, which had

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started in the Midi, a region devoted to the production of cheap wines on a vast scale, without much pretension to quality, where it was decidedly beneficial to the interests of the growers and the public alike, eventually spread to certain of the less-known districts of the Bordelais. One of the latest recruits is the Commune of Margaux.

The Commune of Margaux, one of the two most famous in the Médoc, has for centuries been reputed for producing some of the very finest Bordeaux wines there are; its supreme glory being the First Growth of Château Margaux itself. In addition, the Commune boasts four Second Growths, four Third Growths, one Fourth Growth, about a dozen recognised superior Bourgeois and ordinary Bourgeois Growths and something like thirty *Crus Artisans* and *Crus Paysans*, which represent the tail of the Bordelais hierarchy in point of reputation. There are besides some half-a-dozen large growths planted in *Palu* soil (rich, alluvial clay) on the foreshore of the Gironde and on certain low-lying islands in the stream. Palus vineyards give a very much larger yield of appreciably coarser wines than those planted on the gravel soil further inland, which is geologically typical of the Médo-

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proper. In point of production the ten *Crus Classés* of Margaux yield about 650 *tonneaux** of wine a year, which is easily sold at high prices; the Superior Bourgeois, Bourgeois, Artisan and Peasant Growths account for another 550 between them, the best of which finds a fairly ready market in good years, but much of which has nearly always to be sold at unsatisfactory prices; while the Palus growths produce some 1,100, the sale of which, though prices are relatively low, is on the whole more remunerative because the vintage is much heavier and the cost of cultivation much less. Yet each of these growths, high as humble, every litre of the total average yield of 20,700 hectolitres, has an identical right to the common appellation of "Margaux." Anyone who lives in the Commune of Margaux and has a strip of garden in which there is room to grow a row of a dozen vines of sorts, tended, perhaps, little and carelessly, can sell his wine as "Margaux" with the same legality as his neighbour who may cultivate a considerable and reputed vineyard in the most approved scientific manner.

Formerly the *Crus Bourgeois Supérieurs*

* The *Tonneau Bordelais* has a capacity of four *Barriques* of 22 litres each, or 900 litres in all.

TYPE-WINES

and the *Crus Bourgeois* commanded a ready sale at prices not utterly disproportionate to those attained by the *Crus Classés*, while the ratio between the two orders of growths was nearly always the same, whatever the prices realised for the First Growths, which always set the tone of the market. Nowadays the public knows far less about wines, and a predominantly *parvenu* generation wants to buy the best, and nothing but the best, and is guided almost entirely by names and labels and very little by vintages or careful tasting. Moreover there is no longer the same prejudice against consuming comparatively new wines in this hasty age, and, as a consequence, the laying down of wines that are slow to mature is the exception rather than the rule. The result is that it has become so difficult to sell some of the best and most ancient in fame of the *Crus Bourgeois* at a reasonable profit—to say nothing of the *Crus Artisans et Paysans*—that vines are being grubbed up wholesale. It was to meet this state of affairs that a Co-operative Communal Cellar was founded in Margaux. The avowed object is to utilise all wines made in the territory of the commune, excepting only those that sell readily on their own names and merits,

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so as to produce year in and year out, irrespective of good or bad vintages because blended from both, a uniform wine with a flavour as typical of the best Margaux growths as the nature of a single composite mixture may allow. It is needless to say that such a Type-Wine "Margaux," bearing full guarantees of territorial authenticity though it would, must be a hollow parody of a real wine, because it is a synthesis, a standardisation, of many, blended to the taste of the uncritical majority of the public. Should this experiment prove commercially successful, and the example of Margaux prevail, there would soon be an end to all individuality, to all those finer shades of years and growths that are the delight of the true wine-lover; and the ambition of Margaux and its emulators would be to produce an ever-greater quantity, trading on an ancient and no longer justifiable local renown for quality that was only attained in the past by a deliberate and consistent sacrifice of any idea of securing bumper vintages.

It is the rapid rise of the "*Monopoles*," the very existence of which is an impious challenge to the fair name of wine, that has stimulated the wholesale vatting of these standardised regional growths.

MONOPOLES

MONOPOLES

The French word "*monopole*," as applied to wines, really means a firm's trade-mark, a proprietary brand : in fact very much the same sort of thing as the popular blends of Scotch Whisky advertised by the leading distillers. At present these Monopoles are chiefly confined to the Côte d'Or and the Bordelais, though specimens have already made their appearance in the lists of certain Beaujolais, Côtes du Rhône, Touraine and Anjou wine-merchants who specialise in these particular growths. To explain what these Monopoles really are—an authority of the eminence of M. Raymond Baudouin has not hesitated to stigmatise them as "pharmacy, but not wine"—the French law concerning appellations of origin, which the Monopoles have been devised to circumvent, must first be briefly examined. A wine may now no longer be sold under a territorial designation unless it is territorially entitled to its use : that is to say only when it has been grown exclusively within territory having an identical geographical (but not necessarily administrative) appellation, or within the area of such adjacent communes as may enjoy a recognised and

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long-established right to the better-known name of their neighbour. For instance, a red wine sold as "Pommard" in France must have been grown within the Commune of Pommard, Département de la Côte d'Or, and none other; a white wine sold as Pouilly (not to be confused with the white wine of Pouilly-sur-Loir from the common border of the Départements of the Cher and the Nièvre), which is the name of a tiny hamlet in the Mâconnais and not of any one commune, must have been grown either in the Commune of Solutré (in which this hamlet actually lies), the Commune of Fuissé, the Commune of Vergisson and a cadastrally delimited part of the Commune of Chaintré, in the Département of Saône-et-Loire, and nowhere else.

In the Côte d'Or there are two kinds of red vines: one the proud "*plant noble*," called the Pinot of Pineau, which alone has made the wine of Burgundy the nectar that it is, that will grow in few places and then only on the lower slope—a niggardly beggar so delicate as to be prone to practically every malady that the vine is heir to; and the Gamay,* a

* The coarse and common Gamay of the Côte d'Or must not be identified with the Petit Gamay, the "*plant noble*" of the Beaujolais from which

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“ *plant commun*, ” which will thrive anywhere, especially where the Pinot will not—a hardy vine that is a heavy bearer and causes little anxiety or expense to the vigneron.

As there is very little slope with the right exposure in each commune, it follows that there is a considerable extent of Gamay plantations, since the wine of the Gamay vineyards has just as much right to be sold as “ Pommard,” if it is grown in that commune, as wine grown in the most famous of the historic “ *climats* ” which have been planted exclusively with Pinot vines since time immemorial. (In England, in so far as our “ Pommard ” ever comes from that Commune, or the Burgundy region at all, it is nearly always Gamay wine, French growers and shippers having long ago discovered that most English wine-drinkers, and many English wine-merchants, cannot distinguish it from a Pinot growth, though these respective flavours, once they become familiar, are as dissimilar as chalk and cheese.) An amendment to the *Loi des Appellations d’Origine*, called the *Amendment Capus* after the name of the Senator who introduced it, is now before all the finest wines of the latter region have always been grown.

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the French Chambers, the object of which, should it, as seems probable, be ratified, is to limit any given "*appellation d'origine*" ampelographically as well as territorially: that is, to confine it to wines grown from those august vines that are historically as much an integral part of the wine itself as the traditional area of ground and the geological nature of the soil it has always been grown on. The first important effect of this amendment to the existing state of the law would be that Gamay wines grown in Côte d'Or communes would no longer be entitled to any local appellation of origin (such as "Pommard"), unless it were the generic name "Bourgogne," the lowest, because the most general, qualification of all for any Burgundy, red or white. A given wine, enjoying the right to a special secondary appellation, can always be made to descend the scale from the particular to the general in bad years, or for any other cause that may have marred its quality; but a wine can never be promoted to a higher category than that in which it was born and bred. A simple instance for exemplifying this point is afforded by the official grouping in the Beaujolais. The local appellations of origin here recognised as "*pouvant*

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revendiquer les usages loyaux, locaux et constants," are Moulin-à-Vent, Fleurie, Morgon, Juliéna, Brouilly, Thorins, and Chénas. Now none of these wines can under any circumstances appropriate to itself the name of one of its fellows. Chénas may not style itself Moulin-à-Vent ; nor, for that matter, though there is no sort of temptation to do so, may Moulin-à-Vent style itself Chénas. Yet all are Beaujolais and " Beaujolais " is the common name to which every other wine grown in that region has an equal right. Thus any of these seven " named " wines may call itself simply " Beaujolais," and being a Beaujolais has a clear title to the seemingly magnificent, but in reality exceedingly common and unassuming, patronymic of " Bourgogne." There is only one Mackintosh of Mackintosh, but Andrew Mackintosh, gillie to THE Mackintosh, is as much a " Mackintosh " as the exalted Chief of the Clan.

None the less any wine-merchant has the right to sell a wine, or blend of wines, French or foreign, called by some fantastic name, or whatever title of his own invention he chooses to employ, provided it is not identical with an existing appellation of origin. More often than not the

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bottler selects a name nicely calculated to seem a genuine territorial appellation to the unwary, such as Château This or Clos That, Roc d'Or or Monvalloir ; or, keeping within the law, slightly adapts the spelling of some classic growth with fraudulent intent : Romani for Romanée, etc. Several of the more important Bordeaux and Beaune firms sell Monopoles purely on the strength of their own names and previous reputations as Chose's Blue and Green Labels, or Red and Yellow Capsules, much as English grocers sell different qualities of well-known brands of tea. Where Saints' names are invoked because of their prevalence in Bordelais communes, the wines they consecrate are no more catholic for the doubtful compliment of a spurious, or impersonated, canonisation. Certainly good St Vincent would have none of these imposters either as brother saints or tipplers.

According to M. Raymond Baudouin, a typical recipe adopted by the Côte d'Or alchemists is

- 25% genuine Côte d'Or Burgundy for flavouring.
- 30% good Côtes du Rhône wine to eke out this flavouring.
- 20% ordinary Algerian wine to reduce the cost.

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25% natural wine (*i.e.*, wine with no special flavour or other salient characteristic) to drown the taste of the hot Algerian blending wine and still further reduce the cost of production.

The Bordeaux houses are said to employ

25% genuine Bordeaux.
30% good Midi wine.
20% ordinary Algerian wine.
25% neutral wine.

It is perhaps hardly necessary to add that these formulas are only approximate, and that the actual ingredients of each Monopole vary in nature and ratio with the firm of wine-cooks concerned. Indeed, there are some Côte d'Or houses which claim that their Monopoles are blended exclusively from pure, territorially genuine, Burgundies: a claim which, whether justifiable or not in fact, is best rejected on principle, because there is seldom any inducement to blend a wine good enough to be sold unblended.

A widely organised conspiracy now exists to foist these vinous compounds, which may conceivably be wine and even French wine, but are certainly neither Bordeaux nor Burgundy according to any legal or loyal interpretation of those terms, on purchasers of single bottles

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and diners at restaurants because they yield much bigger profits than ordinary wines. Thanks to our national ignorance of wines, Monopole brands of White Graves (one boasts that it is supplied to the House of Lords), and other so-called "Oyster-Wines," have already gained a certain footing on the English market because they are supposed to offer "more regular and uniform quality" than wines bearing straightforward territorial designations, together with a sustained standard of flavour, independent of vintage vagaries: a thing which it is simplicity itself to produce once "*coupage*," or scientific blending, is resorted to. In the Côte d'Or, where the demand for authentic Côte de Nuits and Côte de Beaune Burgundies is anything up to five times as much as can be genuinely produced, while bad vintages are much more frequent than good, the evil of the "*Marques Personnelles*" has made such rapid progress that already more Monopole wines than territorial growths are sold and the integrity of the sacred name of Burgundy is definitely compromised. Many of these mixtures are quite agreeable to drink, provided always that they are taken for what they really are and not for what they pretend to be, but to offer them to

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one's friends is an unpardonable insult, however merited the insult may sometimes be. The proper sphere for these beverages—if, indeed, they can be said to have any proper sphere other than the hoodwinking of the credulous and ignorant for whom they are lavishly and alluringly labelled in regulation Burgundy and Bordeaux bottles—is for splashing down a hustled and jolted meal in a dining-car. A Monopole may be defined as the *Train Bleu* wine par excellence, since it can always be relied upon to be none the worse for the most violent shaking before taking.

A word of caution is, however, necessary because in French commerical usage this dangerous word "*monopole*" can have two very different interpretations. The first, which is infinitely the more common, as we have just seen, applies to blended wines sold as proprietary brands under the euphemism which the law requires to be printed in the wine-merchant's price-list but not on the label of the bottle: "*exclusif de toute considération d'origine et de cépage*" (*cépage* means in this context the types of vine traditionally associated with particular growths of wine). The second, and entirely respectable sense, which the same term may have,

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is in the case where a certain firm may own or lease the whole of a particular vineyard and can thus claim that it possesses a "monopoly" of its wine. An outstanding instance is provided by Romanée-Conti of Vosne, perhaps the most famous vineyard in the whole world, which is "*Monopole de la Maison De Villaine et Cambon*," for the very good and sufficient reason that this old and honourable firm owns the freehold of the hallowed hectare and a half and bottles every drop of its priceless wine in its own cellars.

Strictly speaking, Champagne (where the term originated and where it is still extensively used), practically all other sparkling wines and most Ports, Sherries, Madeiras and Marsalas are likewise Monopoles, because they are sold under the names of different makers—each separate shipper representing one or more proprietary brands—instead of under the names of particular vineyards or communes. In each of these cases, however, the blending formula, which has made the reputation and constitutes the most jealously guarded secret of each firm, relies wholly on wines enjoying co-equal local appellations. Every drop of Première Zone Champagne is territorially

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genuine "Champagne," although as many as six separate communes, each with its own appellation of origin, may have contributed to its composition. The only way to avoid pitfalls is to know your Côte d'Or communes and "*climats*" and your Bordeaux districts, with their constituent communes and satellite *Crus*, *Clos* and *Châteaux* (the latter is almost the work of a lifetime), more or less by heart, and to apply the cold test of geography to every bottle you are invited to buy. Even then you have no real guarantee in England, for English wine-merchants seem to be able to label wines, or other vinous mixtures, with more or less any names that suit their fancies, and yet enjoy virtual immunity from prosecution, so long as they do not describe as "Port" or "Madeira" wines that were not originally shipped from Oporto and Funchal with the appropriate Portuguese Certificate of Origin.

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The increasing resources of sophistication in their various legal and illegal aspects keep pace with the progress of chemical research. Attempts to level up the irregular work of the sun by artificial

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means, so as to overcome the lack of any uniform degree of maturity in the grape, caused by the alternating clemency and inclemency of the vintage season, is becoming more and more common. The commonest form of adulteration is blending, whether of separate growths or vintages. To-day an unnamed, or vaguely named, wine, gives rise to the suspicion of being the former, just as an undated wine carries a strong presumption of being the latter. Happily the practice of indicating the vintages of wines has now become much more general, and is being adopted by countries, such as Italy, where the custom was formerly unknown. The consumer's best safeguard against blended wine is an estate-bottled growth.* The use of chemical aids in wine-making is to some extent sanctioned by the law. In France wine may now be sugared (*chaptalisation*), sterilised (*pasteurisation*), fortified (*vinage*), watered (*mouillage*), plastered (*plâtrage*), muted (*mutage*) and, in the case of white wines, sulphured (*sulfitage*), within certain defined limits

* It is a significant fact that since the War the only French viticultural region that has increased its export of bottled wines is the Bordelais. This is the region in which estate-bottling is most widely adopted. Exports of Bordeaux wines in the wood have sensibly decreased.

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and subject of formal declaration. The illegal adulterants of wine have been too frequently catalogued to need any recapitulation. Synthetic scents and flavourings are always adding to their number, but it is doubtful whether any synthetic bouquet or taste will ever be able to deceive an experienced palate.

Chaptalisation means supplying the percentage of natural grape-sugar which the most of wet or cold vintage years is deficient in by the same amount of cane or beet sugar. This added sugar is converted into alcohol at the same time, and in precisely the same way, as the natural sugar of the fruit ; thanks to this addition the wine is assured of sufficient alcoholic body to keep, which might not otherwise be possible. Only experts can detect a *vin chaptalisé* from an unsugared wine. This practice is fairly common in the northernmost vineyards, such as Champagne, the Côte d'Or and the Moselle. The German law permits sugaring in certain cases, but no sugared wine may be labelled "*Natur*," or "*Naturrein*." Chaptalisation saved the 1925 vintage in the Bordelais, where this expedient had hitherto been held up to execration as a typically Burgundian falsification. *Pas-*

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teurisation is resorted to so as to preserve young wines of poor vintages against attacks of wine-maladies after they have been bottled. It allows wine to be bottled almost as soon as made, and though it brings the wine well forward in the process, it arrests most of its subsequent natural development. *Vinage* is simply, as in the case of Port, the brandying of sweet wines with extraneous spirit. *Mouillage* is resorted to for reducing the alcoholic strength of common wines, which are taxed and priced at so much the alcoholic degree. *Plâtrage* is the sprinkling of the grapes with plaster of paris while they are being pressed. It is supposed to be a safeguard against the danger of secondary, or acetous, fermentation in hot climates during the first summer following the vintage. *Mutage* is a means of arresting fermentation chemically, so as to permit of one wine being blended with another before allowing a joint fermentation of the two to proceed to completion. *Sulfitage* is used to preserve the bright golden colour of white wines, that are apt to turn brown when exposed to the air, and to prevent *vins liquoreux*, like Sauternes, alcoholising a certain degree of unconverted grape-sugar, or *liqueur*, which they are intended

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to retain. The old method of sulphuring was to smoke the empty casks with sulphur matches before filling them, which resulted in the fumes becoming amalgamated with the wine. The newer, and more dangerous, practice is to add a small percentage of suitably diluted Sulphur Dioxide. The French tolerance of this chemical is 450 parts per million : a proportion identical with that adopted under the new British regulations, which define this "improver" as the only extraneous substance that wine imported into the United Kingdom may contain.

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The outstanding example of the menace to the survival of wine in its natural form is the wholesale demand for what the French call the "*champagnisation*" of all kinds of wine, great and humble, good, bad and indifferent, red, white and *rosé*, quite irrespective of their suitability for gaseous treatment, which tends more and more to absorb choicer and rarer, rather than poorer and more abundant, qualities. This insatiable public appetite for effervescence ignores the amount of those surplus qualities that are available and, in certain cases, readily adaptable, for

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the purpose and so degrades fine still wines from their lawful sphere by constraining them to pop, froth and bubble in indignant and impotent protest instead of gurgling majestically into the glass of honour in a tranquil and limpid stream. Our spendthrift generation is convinced that the sparkling variety of any given wine must needs be its highest, because its costliest, expression. Even to-day, few growths have remained wholly immune to this vandalism, while the commercial pressure brought to bear on the few conscientious recalcitrants is increasing yearly. It would seem that in the United States, where the real meaning of simple words is even more often misunderstood than in England, wine, in common parlance, always implies a sparkling wine of sorts, whether genuine or spurious Champagne. The youth of Europe, hypnotised by jazz strains, convulsions and idioms, is doing its best to make the word have the same ignorantly exclusive and inglorious significance in lands that have spontaneously evolved their own languages and ancestral wassailing traditions. It is arguable whether sparkling wine is really wine at all. What admits of no sort of cavil is that its name needs qualifying by some such admonitory

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adjective so as to distinguish it from the natural wine from which it is, or purports to be, manufactured.

Happily there is yet no sign of a vogue in fortified "qualities" of famous natural wines, but with Port dearer and stronger than ever owing to the new schedule of wine-duties, there is no reason to be over-sanguine. Thanks to the spirited competition of Australian sweet wines, made possible by the considerable preference accorded to Empire wines in this country and an export bounty of 3s. to 4s. the gallon granted by the Commonwealth Government, Portugal and Spain are not likely to have a monopoly of this market for the future. Already, too, a home industry has sprung up for the manufacture of fortified "British Wines"—the unfermented must being imported from abroad in a muted state and "worked up" in this country into a liquid on which the courtesy title of "wine" has been bestowed. Mr Churchill, in the course of his speech on the Budget for 1927, tempered the unwelcome compliment of rendering these concoctions liable to duty by promising to taste them before that measure had the force of law. A less fearless man in his position might well have preferred to renounce the pro-

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ject of raising revenue from such an unpalatable source.

The transformation of various wines (Chablis, Vouvray, Anjou, Mercurey, Cap Corse, etc.) into "tonic wines" or *apéritifs* (the different proprietary brands of Vermouth, French and Italian, together with the numerous "Quinas," "Quinquinas," "Kinas," and the like, to say nothing of those combined with meat-extract sold by English apothecaries) by an admixture of quinine and other "appetising" herbs and "restorative" drugs, is another barbarism that is now assuming considerable proportions. This heinous practice is at all events of more respectable antiquity than "*champagnisation*," having been familiar in classical times, with rather different but no more inviting ingredients, in the guise of "wine tempered by the nymphs." As it is, Great Britain imports more Italian Vermouth than Italian wine. Non-alcoholic wine, or sterilised grape-juice, which is now prepared in France, Germany, Switzerland and the United States, is the most recent fad in the way of *Weinersatz*. It has been claimed that this emasculated beverage has considerable medicinal value. Doubtless it will soon be advertised in this country under some such slogan as

MALADIES OF THE VINE

“ Take the Modish Grape-Cure of Meran at Merriest Margate (or in your own home) with Vincent’s Vitamined Verjuice.” These parodies of wine, it is hardly necessary to add, belong to the same school of “refreshing pick-me-ups” as Cydrax, Kop’s Ale, Herb-Beer, Kola Champagne, Raspberry Sherbet and other mineral-water and Soda-Fountain eruptions. The survival of these dismal and sickly tipples depends on the survival of the Teetotal Dogma which ordains the purging of the pride of the palate with one or other of these potable Puritan penitences.

MALADIES OF THE VINE

It is too often forgotten that the vine-lands of Europe, and the majority of the Australian, North and South African vineyards planted with European vines, came within an ace of total destruction by those terrible scourges the Oidium (first noted in 1845) and the Phylloxera (which appeared in 1868), which devastated the viticultural world only a decade or two apart in the middle of the last century. Both came from America, and pious French vigneronns see in Prohibition a divine visitation on a country so hardened

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in iniquity as to have wantonly disseminated, if not deliberately incubated, these frightful pestilences, in despair of ever equalling the quality of European wines. Of the two, the latter, because it was recurrent and seems to be endemic to the vine, was by far the more catastrophic. Chemical means, such as sulphur-spraying, were eventually devised for coping with the former, so that it could be, if not eradicated, at least held in check. The Phylloxera, on the other hand, for long defied the concerted efforts of the world's most skilful chemists and agriculturists, traversing Europe from Portugal to the Crimea like a forest fire, and even passing mysteriously beyond the seas to infest the young vineyards of other continents. The havoc wrought was inestimable, particularly in France, where a million hectares of vineyards, which have never since been replanted, were swept out of existence. Indeed, when this murrain was at its zenith, there was for some time grave doubt whether the French peasantry could ever be induced to replant their perished vines. In the magnitude of its destructiveness and the swiftness and universality of its contagion, the Phylloxera can only be compared to the dreaded Pink Bol-Worm parasite of the cotton-

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plant. Ultimately salvation was found in wholesale replanting with grafted vines. The peculiarity of this pest was that it attacked the roots, but not the foliage, of the European vines, while the roots of the indigenous American species were as inured against its infection as their foliage was susceptible to it. Thus by grafting picked European vine-shoots on to suitable American vine-stocks, a hardy plant could be evolved, both roots and foliage of which were sufficiently resistant to the cryptogam. There are, of course, plenty of other blights and distempers that afflict the vine in greater or less degree according to the species concerned and the nature of the soil and climate it is grown in. The vigneron's life is one unceasing round of watch and ward, toil and prayer. Not for a single week in the year can the smallest vineyard go untended. A new and more dreadful *Phylloxera* might appear at any moment, though the viticulturist is now much better equipped to resist fresh parasitic invasions.

A word may be said in connection with the maladies peculiar to the vine on the vexed question of the relative merits of the wines grown from grafted and ungrafted vines. It is usually claimed that

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the quality of the pre-*phylloxera* wines, grown from old French ungrafted vines, was infinitely superior to anything that the best grafted vines can ever hope to produce. This contention is not supported by the consensus of opinion among wine-growers and wine-merchants, though some make a reservation in favour of the old *vieilles souches* Burgundies. The new vines show no "yellow streak." They have acquired none of the primitive characteristics of native American vines, such as their foxy flavour, except their New-World vigour. The wines they yield mature more rapidly and are certainly, like the grafted vines themselves, shorter-lived, but they give an equal quality with a slightly larger yield per acre. Fifty or a hundred years hence it will be possible to pass a more definite and dispassionate judgment on this controversy. It should, however, be remembered that those who insistently decry all wines grown from grafted vines are generally old gentlemen who have already reached that age when, like the Señor d'Asumar, in "*Gil Blas*," the peaches of their youth seem infinitely larger, juicier and more luscious than any that are grown to-day.

FUTURE OF EMPIRE WINES

THE FUTURE OF EMPIRE WINES

During the South African War we were urged to think imperially. After the World War, the nation, in spite of saturation with American films, was considered to have pondered sufficiently in an imperial sense for the time to be ripe to ask it to eat, drink and clothe itself imperially as well. The dogma of Free Trade was definitely abandoned and several minor Empire preferences were offered us as grist for mental stimulus. To food for the mind we were exhorted to add food for the body, though the reverse process might have made a stronger appeal with a more logical nation, besides simplifying the necessary change in purchasing habits which had survived the outworn doctrines of Bright and Cobden who had been instrumental in moulding them.

To smoke and drink imperially is rather a different matter to eating and dressing imperially. Most of us would gladly smoke and drink what our fellow-Britons grow if the question of quality did not persist in intruding itself between the cup and the lip. Even when we are prepared to ignore this aspect of practical patriotism, imperial flattery of the palate has a

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way of forcing itself on our attention at the very first puff or sip. Nor are we always quite honest with ourselves when we make a resolution to eat, drink, smoke or dress imperially for the future, because on these occasions we often refrain from making an inventory of the mental reservations which, consciously or unconsciously, we bring to the list. Not even the most ardent patriot, until at least he loses his palate, can pretend that Borneo Cigars or Burmah Cheroots are superior to Havana Cigars and Manilla Cheroots. So it is with Empire Wines. Australian "Burgundy" and South African "Hock" could not pass muster for the French and German wines they so unblushingly pretend to be with the wine-waiter of the National Liberal Club.

It is an axiom in wine that quality can only be forthcoming in countries where viticulture depends primarily on the home market, and even then it is less often attained than otherwise. For all practical purposes there are only four provenances of Empire wines: South Africa, Australia, Palestine and Cyprus, which already produce more than they can readily dispose of, as only the first and last are in any real sense wine-drinking countries. A little wine is grown in

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Cashmere, Canada and Malta as well, but the quantity is negligible. From climatic and geological deductions it seems probable that vineyards could be successfully planted in parts of New Zealand, Kenya, Rhodesia and the middle slopes of the Himalayas, Ghats and Nilgherry Hills in India, but there is no potential demand for fresh sources of supply unless their produce is of a vastly superior quality to anything now grown on British soil. The Cyprian Commanderia wine of Paphos is historically one of the world's most famous growths, but it is doubtful whether its peculiar flavour will ever make any strong appeal to the British palate. Little of the ordinary wine of the island is now exported to England, the bulk of such as is being absorbed by the manufacturers of a well-known brand of "Tonic Wine," which is very popular with rigid teetotalers and connoisseurs of patent medicines. Quantitatively, there is little hope for Empire wines even when protected by substantial preferential tariffs. Algerian common wines, to say nothing of the most ordinary French, Spanish and Italian growths, will always be cheaper and more abundant than any similar wines grown in Australia or the Cape, which have to pay far higher freight

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and are cultivated by vine-dressers that are far more highly paid. Even should the Algerian supply fail for any cause, and at present it is increasing steadily every year, larger and larger quantities of Argentine and Chilian wines are becoming available for export. Algerian wines are not particularly choice—they have only been cultivated for about sixty years—but some of them are superior to anything produced within the Empire. Moreover, except in England, they are sold under their local Algerian name as Médéa, Miliana, Mascara, and Coteaux de l'Harach, etc., and not as Algerian "Claret," "Burgundy," "Chablis," "Graves," and "Sauternes"; though our own wine-merchants, save when, as is not infrequent, they use them anonymously, do not hesitate to give them these absurd and mendacious titles.

All other Empire wines, with one or two honourable exceptions, such as the South African Riebeeck Kastel and the Australian Highercombe Amber, produce, on their own label avowals, nothing but self-styled imitations of the leading European wines, prefixed by the safeguarding qualification Australian, South African or Palestine, as the case may be,

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which reduces these fraudulent claims to nonsense. Even where local names are adopted, such as Schoongezicht, Paarl and Drakenstein, they are used to qualify the meaningless title "Hock." It is a lie. The wines of these three districts—and they are about the best which the Empire has to offer—are, and always will be, nothing but Schoongezicht, Paarl and Drakenstein respectively. They are not, and cannot be, "Hocks," even though grown from the choicest Rhenish Riesling vines, because Hock is a purely German wine to which the Rhineside town of Hochheim-am-Main has given its name. Hochheim is in the Regierungsbezirk Wiesbaden of Prussia, and not in the Cape Province of the Union of South Africa. Nearly all Australian, and a great many South African, red wines describe themselves as "Burgundies" (there are, to be sure, a few "Clarets" and "Hermitages" as well) and often perpetrate a further, and yet more laughable, contradiction in terms by claiming that they are grown from Cabernet or Malbec vines: classic French vines, it is true, but native to the Bordelais and not Burgundy, where their cultivation is quite unknown. Burgundy is the product of a certain type of vine grown from time immemorial on a particu-

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lar kind of soil with a particular exposure, at a particular altitude, in a particular climate prevailing between a particular longitude and a particular latitude that coincide in eastern France : a concatenation of elements and circumstances which cannot possibly be reproduced in Australia, South Africa or anywhere else. Nor does "Burgundy," as is sometimes supposed, denote a certain strength of red wine, a full-bodied growth, in contradistinction to "Claret" (which by the accident of a name, that should rightly be Bordeaux, is not the fraud it sounds, since "Claret" really means no more than a light-red wine) as a term used to imply a lighter-bodied and much less alcoholic type. The alcoholic contents of good Bordeaux and Burgundy, quality for quality, are usually more or less identical. The strength of wines is calculated in alcoholic degrees and not by appropriating names filched from certain representative growths. The essential vinous ethers of these spurious "Hocks" and "Burgundies," scanty and not very subtle though they are, would, like the rose's perfume, exhale bouquets just as bland under their own, or any other, names. If a single swallow does not of itself herald an English summer, all the Emus in the

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Commonwealth cannot transmute a South Australian vintage into the *Grande Année* of a Côte d'Or *Tête de Cuvée*.

Even if it be true that vigorous and psychologically intelligent advertising can increase the sales of any article, irrespective of its worth or utility, this would scarcely seem to apply to that particular brand, notable among "Burgundies" which are "generous but not spirity, soft but not sugary" for being sold under the device "Every Meal a Banquet." That slogan "Every Meal a Banquet" is nicely calculated to deter any normal person from buying this particular brand—and that without even tasting it. Banquets are usually heavy and singularly depressing functions which people like Lord-Lieutenants, princes of the blood, mayors, chairmen of companies, politicians, public officials and diplomats accept with a heavy heart, and only because such occasions are part of their regular duties. Secretly they dread these orgies of ceremonious and oratorical eating as a pernicious waste of time, nefarious to their digestions. Thus we surmise that a wine capable of transforming every meal, however simple, intimate and unpretentious, into that portentously aldermanic and dyspeptic thing, a banquet,

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must be singularly heavy and soporific in its effects.

If real quality in Empire Wines is to be attained at all, it can only be by abandoning the existing methods of mass-production of Type-Wines and deliberately fostering the particularisation of certain small, but promising, local growths. South Africa, where irrigation of the vineyards is not as common as in Australia—irrigation more than doubles the yield and more than halves the quality—has already made some progress in this direction. As has already been noticed, wines are grown in the Cape at certain localities called Schoongezicht, Paarl and Drakenstein, which we assume, just because they are named, are probably of far better quality than the unnamed South African growths. The Australian Type-Wines, on the other hand, are apparently not even regional specimens of their kind. The average consumer of flagon wines knows nothing whatever about them except that they are grown somewhere in a vast Dominion which is a continent in itself. Keystone, Tintara, Ophir and Harvest are registered trademarks, not places on the map.

That these Australian and South African masqueraders under French and

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German colours can be sold in Great Britain has been amply proved. In 1926 the consumption of Australian wines increased by over a million gallons. That their sale would fall away by nearly as much—drinking imperially is a habit that, to be abiding, requires some little time to form—were the preference and bounty removed there can be little doubt.

Palestine, the latest recruit to the wine-lands of the Empire, produces imitations—very bad imitations, too, though the wines to which these illustrious and illusory resemblances are attributed by their Zionist growers are, in their rough and humble way, sometimes quite passable wines—of all the classical growths of France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Hungary and Greece : everything, in fact, except an honest and avowedly Palestine wine *tel quel*. That some of these vineyards are now being turned over to the cultivation of table-grapes, or transformed into orange-groves, for lack of a market for their plagiarising wines, cannot be regretted as long as the Holy Land, of all regions of the earth, has not the proper pride to say of its first-fruits, “ a poor thing, but mine own,” rather than “ these are extremely fine reproductions, made

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purposely to resemble the best-known growths of other countries in all respects, and sold under their names at a very reasonable price."

Thus it is all the more discouraging and humiliating to find that, according to the "*Times Trade Supplement*," the British Empire Producers' Organisation counsels Empire wine-growers "to give more study to questions of bottles and labels, using accepted shapes and designs *and leaving alone certificates of purity*." The circular which recommends the expedient of putting new wine into old bottles, a practice recognised as disastrous even in biblical days, closes with the extraordinary statement that "Empire wines are sounder than most foreign wines at similar price, and are only prejudiced by devices (perhaps just the absence of these superfluous certificates of purity?) not usually associated with good wines." This advice does scant justice to the commercial probity and intelligence of a nation of shopkeepers. It is clear that the very reverse is desirable. Empire Wines should evolve their own shapes of bottles and designs for their labels, just as much as they ought to develop their own individual flavours and other inherent characteristics, to say nothing of discovering their

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own names. Several of the smaller French growths (notably Anjou and Frontignan), which have recently experienced some difficulty in disposing of their wines remuneratively, have adopted individual types of bottle, and find this policy promotes interest on the part of the public and undoubtedly helps to increase their sales.

If Britons do not have a little more proper pride in their own husbandry, "Empire Produce" will soon come to have something of the purely imitative significance formerly associated with that familiar hall-mark for cheapness and shoddiness: "Made in Germany." German wines, however, are neither of these *péjoratif* things, for in German vineyards, which are far from extensive, quantity has always been subordinated to quality. The result is that the yield is very small indeed, while growths like Steinberger and Schloss Johannisberger fetch prices more than double those of the finest French wines, white as red, which are in no wise inferior to them. The reason once again is that German wines do not imitate any others and are content to be unique of their kind. The very considerable difference in price, fine vintage for fine vintage, prevailing between

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them and the choicest French growths is in ratio to the much larger production of the latter. The royal road to an enhanced quality in Empire Wines is in imitating the painstaking methods and local pride of French and German wine-growers instead of aping the names of their inimitable wines. Empire Wines, even if they are only ordinary beverage wines, must dare to be themselves and brave the risk of standing on their own merits and being sold under their own, and nothing but their own, names. The industry of no nation can take the same pride in slavishly copying the wares of another country as in developing the particular indigenous excellencies of its own. Less than a century ago the Cape produced one wine which became world-famous. That Constantia has disappeared from the tables of European epicures need occasion no surprise. The reason was a simple one. The demand for this wine, which became as fashionable as Madeira, soon exceeded the supply. Constantia was grown in a single vineyard. Increasing popularity led to over-production of its vines, and the growing of much spurious "Constantia," that was really bad imitation Port, from hastily planted and badly tended vineyards in the surrounding

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countryside. To-day Constantia, like the Maronean and Pramnian of the Classics, is no more than a memory, though the vineyard still survives and produces, I believe, a "Constantia Claret" (it might have been yet another "Burgundy" but for the irresistible appeal of alliteration) in its stead. The moral is a clear one. Constantia, a fortified red wine, was sold as Constantia and not as Cape "Port," or Cape "Alicant." True, it was often referred to as "Cape Constantia," but this was evidence not of a specious fraud but of a certain local pride in its unusual origin, since no European wine existed of the same name.

The vine has now been acclimatised in South Africa for nearly three hundred years, thus giving the older vineyards time to work out some of that virgin rankness of soil which is a serious handicap to the attainment of fine quality. What South African and Australian viticulture most needs are poorer and more worn soils, more carefully chosen exposures and altitudes for vineyards; and sterner pruning of the vines so as to ensure a far smaller yield per acre.

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LEGISLATIVE RESTRICTIONS ON THE SALE OF WINES AND SPIRITS

Wine-drinkers are nearly always temperate in their opinions. That is why they are not "Temperance" advocates, the word having become debased into meaning the most intolerant teetotalism and the vilification of that essentially temperate beverage wine. Wine-drinkers, as temperate persons, are as much opposed to alcoholism as to teetotalism. Teetotalers, as intemperate fanatics, are opposed not so much to alcoholism as to alcohol itself—and their dour Puritan hearts are virtuously indignant that those who like it should continue to enjoy the liberty of drinking it. Wine-drinkers do not drink between meals, which is one of the first rules of health. They drink at their meals, just as teetotalers, who are every whit as thirsty as inveterate beer-drinkers, quaff their gaseous dill-waters at all sorts of times and in all sorts of places—preferably opposite ancient ruins: perhaps because they suggest to them the inexorable decline and fall of the brewing barons and the imminent decay of the fortunes of distillery magnates. To own a cellar of one's own is to be independent of vexatious curtailments of drinking hours.

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Just and proper as these restrictions are in theory, at all events until human nature can be relied upon to resist obviously harmful temptations more stoically than hitherto, they inevitably penalise those whose time is not their own. A poor man, however, cannot afford a cellar, which is supposed to imply a degree of affluence that is far from being borne out by the actual cost of laying down a few moderately good and varied bins. It is the wine-merchant who keeps up the idea that a cellar is an expensive luxury, because it is far more profitable for him to sell his customers fully matured wine than to encourage them to buy the same wine from him as soon as bottled and let it mature for nothing in their own cellars. When the interests of true temperance prevail in Parliament, light natural wines will be taxed so lightly that anyone who could afford to order a dozen bottles of Bass or Guinness at a time from the grocer's could afford to stock a modest cellar. Spirits, on the other hand, will be taxed still more highly, and fortified wines proportionately to the added spirit they contain. The heavier incidence of duty on sparkling wines is not likely to be removed, because there is no valid reason why it should be. The consumption of

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sparkling wines, as we have already seen, needs to be discouraged in the higher interests of natural wines. A proper purity standard for beer is not likely to be enforced as long as the public remains apathetic on the subject : that is to say until the time comes for the whole attitude of the state to the liquor question to be reviewed, not at the behest of a handful of teetotal fanatics, or the trade, but in response to the insistent demand of the consumer himself.

The question may be asked, " Should the sale of wines and spirits be a state monopoly, and is this likely to become general in the near future ? " Leaving aside all academic arguments for and against socialism, the answer would seem to be, as in the case of railway ownership and operation, " It depends on the country concerned and the particular genius of that nation ; its administrative efficiency and its attitude towards the state and state institutions." It is, however, unthinkable that in the future any state will consent to abdicate that degree of control of the liquor trade and public health and order afforded by levying discriminatory duties on the consumption of spirits. Even in France Absinthe has had to be made illegal. In Sweden a

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compromise between state and commercial exploitation has been adopted. A single company, the *Aktiebolaget Vin och Spritcentralen*, farms the Government's monopoly and hands over all surplus profits to the state after paying a small fixed dividend to its shareholders. This company also owns all the distilleries and wine-merchants' shops in the country. It issues a sort of pass-book to consumers, showing the holder's name, address, profession and taxation assessment and the number of bottles of wine and spirits he is entitled to monthly on this basis. This is certainly not socialism, for it substitutes the ratio of taxation for the doctrine of equality of opportunity ; but if it denies the poor man the right to buy as much as the rich, it prevents the rich man buying as much as he likes, or devoting more than a certain percentage of his income to laying down a fine cellar of wine. Reminiscent of Food Control and Food Cards as these regulations sound, they seem to work well enough in practice. If a man may not himself import the sort of wines with which he would prefer to fill his cellar, the company, according to Mr Hedges Butler, gives him at very reasonable prices a choice of 862 varieties of wines and 263 of spirits and liqueurs : a

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much wider selection than the score of most prominent London wine-merchants stock between them. From a variety of causes, of which inertia and chronic conservatism are the principal, British wine-merchants, still nominally competitive with one another, are coming more and more to resemble a number of branches of one and the same company, offering their customers an ever smaller selection of stereotyped growths. The invariable answer to this criticism is "Few but choice," which is liable to provoke a slightly incredulous smile. "Few but choice," faithfully echo the licensed grocers and the restaurants. The most prominent wine-merchant in Regent Street displays a wine-list so brief that it could be put to shame by any French provincial *épicerie*. Indeed British vintners of the present day seem to have taken as their device Sancho Panza's words, "I come from my vineyard and know nothing"—except that very few of them have ever seen a vineyard or a wine-press. The public must be educated in wine, if its sale is to increase; a greater sale implies greater variety and cheapness and better average quality. Our prosperous wine-merchants, supinely content in the main to make

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quick and easy profits by the sale of proprietary brands of Port and Champagne, are much too easy-going to give themselves the trouble of undertaking any more intelligent propaganda than editing crude circulars extolling those "very nice wines—not *too* dry" at bankrupt stock prices ("cost double"), the curious style of which is so unchanging as to seem traditional. In fact in nine cases out of ten they no longer know enough about the commodity they deal in to be able to do more than sell bottles containing it, much as a barman replenishes beer-mugs at the tap. There is an urgent need of a better-educated and more enterprising generation of wine-merchants, knowing their honourable profession at least as well as their grandfathers did. True, the last word in advertising wine was said many centuries ago. "Good wine (unlike the Monopoles and the sham "Hocks" and "Burgundies") needs no bush"; but this presupposes that good wine should not be conspicuous by its absence.

Prohibition in Norway, which I believe actually antedates the celebrated Volstead Act, was expounded to me on the bridge of a collier hove to in a thick sea-fog off Copenhagen by one of the finest navigators, drunk or sober, but particu-

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larly drunk, that it has ever been my good fortune to encounter.

This Danish skipper gave me to understand (I cannot, of course, vouch for the accuracy of his information) that in the long night of the Norwegian winter there was absolutely nothing else to do but to take to theology or get drunk. When drunk, the Norwegian crofter or fisherman, however theological his bent, readily finds a second source of distraction in beating his wife. The women of Norway seem to have got tired of being beaten even before the outbreak of the War. When the War restricted fishing, they began to take counsel together. Reflecting that the Fiend Alcohol was at the root of all their troubles and the immediate cause of all their bruises, they decided that he must be exorcised in due legal form. To bring this about all that was necessary was the power and exercise of the vote. The granting of the suffrage to women does not appear to have aroused any sort of opposition in a "progressive" country like Norway, and the right seems no sooner to have been demanded than accorded. Once Norwegian womanhood was armed with the franchise, the first measure insisted on was that imposing Prohibition on Norwegian manhood. Their

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husbands do not seem to have been aware of the danger, or perhaps they were encouraged to get rather exceptionally drunk during the week devoted to a plebiscite on this purely feminine issue. Alas, the plight of these energetic and resourceful Viking ladies, once their husbands were deprived of Aqavit, was in no wise ameliorated ; their last state was decidedly worse than their first ! Having now no earthly distraction whatever, their husbands beat them from morning to night, and, being involuntarily sober, very much more efficiently than they had ever done before. Thereupon the united voice of the Norse women clamoured for the abrogation of Prohibition even as they had but recently clamoured for its ratification. Once again they had their way, and the country returned peaceably to the *status quo ante* of a moderate degree of drunkenness and a moderate, because quasi-inebriated, prevalence of wife-beating.

At this point the skipper's account left off, and we may perhaps supplement his graphic statement by some rather colder data. However much bruised Norwegian women may have expressed the desire to see Prohibition abolished, the chief motive force in securing it was the economic

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pressure exercised by foreign countries. Norway is neither an agricultural nor an industrial country. The nation lives on what statisticians are fond of calling "invisible exports"—in this case carrying other nations' goods in its bottoms—and in exporting the produce of its fisheries, mostly in the form of dried split-cod, known variously as *Stokfisk*, *Morue* and *Bacalão*. This is shipped in enormous quantities to Roman Catholic countries for Fridays' dinners. Now, split-cod, though a foodstuff, is not a prime necessity of life, like corn and meat, and the countries that buy it find no difficulty in putting an embargo on it at need. Also Norway is a small and pacific, and therefore impotent, nation, which can be defied or penalised with impunity, not a great power backed by a large fleet and the power of manipulating higher finance. For the sake of its shipping and the export of its *Stokfisk*, Norway was forced in 1921 to accept an annual contingent of 4,000 hectolitres of French wine, 5,000 of Spanish and 8,500 of Portuguese : or a total of some 385,000 gallons, a very considerable amount for a poor country of well under three million inhabitants. Thus Norway is now wetter than ever. A state *Vin Monopole*t conducts the liquor

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trade and distils corn-brandy. Wine may be freely bought, but spirits can only be obtained at a chemist's shop on a doctor's prescription: a regulation the enforcement of which used in former days to coincide with an alarming increase in such maladies as snake-bite, anæmia, vertigo, melancholia, personal bereavement, bankruptcy, religious mania, debility and old age in certain "dry" states of the American Union.

At present our bejazzed manhood cannot summon to its aid enough of our old Viking virility to countenance wife-beating in any form, even when the chastisement is clearly justified. But when our masterful womenkind seek to impose Prohibition on us, who knows but that the long-suffering worm may not turn at last? Perhaps the experience of a short term of this ban might be the cause of curing half our domestic troubles.

Much the same sort of system of placing few or no restrictions on the sale of wine, and investing the purchase of spirits with considerable formalities, has been adopted by certain Canadian provinces. In Quebec, possibly as a legacy of French blood, the sale of wine vastly exceeds that of spirits, in spite of a continuous invasion of this hospitable territory by

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thirst-maddened tourists from the freest of all countries at its gates. In Belgium, too, there are restrictions on the sale of spirits, liqueurs and *apéritifs*, but none on that of beer and wine.

The vicissitudes of Norway lead us to the consideration of modern international commercial treaties in their relation to wine. The old trade agreements between nations in pre-war days were usually rather amateur, almost altruistic, affairs. The industrial struggle for existence had not, as then, become acute, because there were more rich and fewer poor states in the relatively happy family of the nations. To-day quotas, contingents and categories of goods are carefully scheduled and obstinately bargained for, each high contracting party putting forward its irreducible demands, together with certain other claims advanced as camouflage, which are quietly abandoned once the acceptance of the former is conceded. Germany produces fine white wines and but little red. Her new commercial treaty with France, now being negotiated, stipulates, within the agreed annual contingent of French wine which she agrees to accept, for a minimum of white and a maximum of red. But this is not all. Germany was a pioneer in strict

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application of the doctrine of Appellation of Origin as applied to wine, and Bethmann-Hollweg's *Reichsweingesetz* of 1909 preceded similar legislation in any other country, with the possible exception of Hungary. Thus it is not surprising to find that Germany should insist on stringent *appellations d'origine* for the French wines she pledges herself to buy. Going further still in this direction, the German Ministry of Commerce has divided the annual quota into fixed ratios between the several viticultural regions of France : not so much in proportion to their importance as in accordance with German domestic needs and tastes. It is left to the French Government to draw up a list of recognised *local* appellations within each of these regions (that is to say the names of separate communes and smaller, but more famous, growths) and submit it to the approval of the competent German authorities before the treaty enters into vigour. The Belgian Government was the real precursor in this direction, for the recently concluded Belgo-French Commercial Treaty names over two hundred appellations of French wines, the authenticity of which is guaranteed by the French state, as being alone entitled to be admitted into Belgian

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territory. The only appellations of wine which enjoy protection under any commercial agreement concluded with this country are Port and Madeira. Wine sold as "Port" or "Madeira" in Great Britain and Northern Ireland must be the authentic produce of the Alto Douro or the Island of Madeira, fortified, as required by Portuguese law, to a given alcoholic strength: that is a "*vinho surdo*" or "*vinho muito*." The first of these exclusive appellations is very distasteful to Australian manufacturers of sweet wines, who are anxious to call their more spirituous wares "Australian Port." All other wines in this country are still very much what their vendors choose to label them. Fortunately nations are as imitative as persons. It is to be hoped, therefore, that when the time comes for the existing Anglo-French Commercial Treaty to be renewed—which is sure to entail long and pertinacious haggling on both sides on account of the recent French embargo on British coal—this state of affairs will be remedied in so far as French, or *soi-disant* French, wines are concerned. This hope is not so naïve as it may sound. It will be as much in the interests of our negociators to see that the fixed minimum quota of French wines, which we shall

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probably have to agree to admit annually, shall be the best, instead of among the worst, of their kinds, as it will be in that of the French to stipulate that henceforward no wines sold in the United Kingdom as French shall be anything but French, and that they must correspond in the strictest territorial sense with the names printed on their labels. Thus, granted a reasonable degree of skill in our politicians and public officials, the further we deviate from Free Trade the better should be the quality of the goods we receive from other countries: an idea altogether too simple to have ruffled the brains of the Manchester School mandarins.

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The undying snob in man reveals himself as much in the choice of the wines he drinks as in the clothes he wears or the conversation he affects. Waves of fashion that depend on the praise or blame of someone in authority—a king, a beau, a singer, a sportsman, a politician or an actor—sweep in a wine and sweep it out again. Some have their brief spell and are no more seen; others return at almost fixed intervals like solar eclipses. Port

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we owe to anti-French bias and a long-forgotten political treaty concluded in the heat of this same rancour ; but heavily reinforced Port will be with us till the threat of Prohibition assumes proportions menacing enough to make us confine ourselves to natural wines as the most logical defence against the misrepresentations of the teetotalers. Sherry, on the other hand, has been coming in and going out ever since its name was Sack. Madeira's eclipse has a more rational explanation, for the quality of that wine has never recovered from the scourge of the Oidium, which all but exterminated its vineyards in the Fifties. The fate of Madeira was the ordinary fate of things that are out of sight. The vines of the island were not in normal bearing again till some decades afterwards, when the old John Company, the largest buyer of Madeira wines, had already ceased to exist. Claret and Burgundy, long eschewed as French growths and penalised by prohibitive duties to the profit of an ever more alcoholic Port, blossomed for us anew when Gladstone accomplished the revolutionary step of lowering the duties on light wines to a shilling the gallon in 1861. Hermitage has disappeared in England, as Arbois has in

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France. Hock and Moselle were patriotically, even, considering the absence of supply, a little ostentatiously, renounced during the War as Hunnish and unhallowed things—so much so, indeed, that our greatest living authority on wines passed them over in silence in a book, which is a classic, written during that period of passionate professorial denunciation of everything German. Yet long before Locarno they had returned in triumph to their old popularity in the Houses of Parliament, as advertising circulars were careful to inform us. Greek wines, like Byron's verse, have had their day. Tokay, now a memory and almost no more made, was hallowed by the prefix "Imperial" and the knowledge that it was the gift, more precious than jewelled orders or honorary colonelcies, which kings exchanged in the family circle. Italian wines have lately enjoyed a good deal of popularity among artistic persons, explicable by the charm of a Chianti flask rather than by the average quality of its contents. Marsala, now usually despised as a cheap and common wine, should be dear to us always as a memory of Nelson. It is still piously esteemed in the Navy, where Rum has long since passed out of fashion. Balkan wines may

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yet enjoy a vogue if Ruritanian princesses prove as good business women as they are beautiful. Algerian and Tunisian wines we know well, but more often under Europeanised titles. The Anglo-Catholic and Jewish communities make much of Palestine wines, which have little but scriptural geography in their favour. Champagne, costliest of all wines in the popular imagination, has always held its own for this very reason. Just as Sherry, decade by decade, had to be paler or darker in colour and lighter or heavier in body, so Champagne, which began by being very sweet, has now become dry as a bone. Yet "dry" Champagne only dates from the Sixties. Sweet it may yet become again, as sweet as the Russians liked it, when women become sovereign arbiters of food and drink. A decade or two ago *Carte Anglaise* was the most expensive and fashionable degree of "liqueuring" in Champagne. To-day it is *Drapeau Américain* (why not "Volstead Bone-Dry Monopole"?) for the Dollar is at a premium over the Sovereign. Whisky, formerly an ostler's dram in the Scottish Highlands, was introduced by golfers, with the hearty support of the medical profession, and became popular simultaneously with that

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now universal game. Irish Whisky, though extensively drunk, has, for some curious reason, never been fashionable. There are few brandy-drunkards to-day. Cognac seems to enjoy most esteem in England as a medicinal restorative. Gin was rescued from Mrs Gamp's tea-pot by the sudden popularity during the War of those American barbarisms, cocktails : a popularity largely due to their requiring elaborate paraphernalia and the fact that they were illegal in their native land. Every millionairess who could boast a Diamond Sunburst, we were given to understand, had her own portable illicit still and a marble gin-fountain in her platinum-tapped bathroom. Liqueurs, chiefly because they are sweet and many-hued, have been steadily growing in favour with ladies ever since dining out in restaurants became an integral part of our national habits.

Let no man lull himself into a sense of false security by imagining that the day is still far distant when women will rule the cellar as well as rocking Baby—and the bottle—in the cradle. A book on wine which appeared last year addressed all its advice, as though this was the most natural thing in the world, to "the good hostess," "the mistress of the house,"

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who in these days "can afford to smile" at Dr Middleton's "ungracious behaviour" in defining her sex as "Creation's glory, but anticlimax following a wine of a century old." Another male supremacy lies low! Man is lord of the cob-webbed bins no more; the cellar-key, even as the ballot-paper, has been snatched from him by a stronger hand.

Now women's real taste in wine is notoriously for such as are sweet. Fielding, who knew the sex better than most, and was far from ungallant, was not the first to remark on it. In one of his now forgotten plays, as Mr André Simon reminds us, the hero, or some kindly male character, after making the same observation, sends out for a pint of "Mountain" (the luscious, honey-sweet Muscat wine now known as Malaga, but no longer obtainable in an age vowed to a cult of dry wines except in the humbler public-houses) to comfort a lady's vapours or soothe her alarums. Of course, many men also secretly prefer sweet wines to dry. Our national wine, Port, is decidedly sweet, and could not possibly be called "dry" in the sense that Sherry often is. But Vintage Port, the feminist authority declares, "is not a woman's taste in wine," though it must surely be a nearer

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approach to it than either Vintage Claret or Vintage Burgundy. Anyhow, Port, as the classic monologue "My fust 'usbing was a Guardsman" clearly shows, is the most popular wine among women in the saloon-bars of public-houses. At present all women are exclaiming with a single voice that they execrate sweet wines and have always preferred dry, the very driest in fact, even in those dim and distant days when they were not as yet fashionable. This is only a parrot cry catching up the echo of the vogue of the moment—"Tell me what is being drunk and I will tell you that I like it best"—which need deceive nobody. It is like those terrible headaches, unknown to their grandmothers, which have induced them one and all to shear off their tresses and shave their napes. M. Daret, the distinguished *Maître de Chaix* at Château Yquem, perhaps the greatest authority on *vins liquoreux*, knows better and is far from being dismayed. Sauternes was never dearer than it is to-day. It can only be assumed that drinking it in secret enhances its price. Mrs G. B. Stern in "Bouquet" furiously denounces Sauternes and claims that it is as monstrous to suppose that women are incapable of sharing "men's" taste for dry wines, or

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Cognac, as any other hereditary "male" passion, preference, proclivity or prowess. This delightful, if unconvincing, book ends on a note of wistful nostalgia for the first properly mixed icy-cold cocktail waiting to reward her for a strenuous and rather hustled tour of *dégustation* through the principal French viticultural districts. I very much suspect that during the course of this pilgrimage "A Deputy was King." The real G. B. Stern was probably in spiritual residence at that "Palace" in Nice or Monte Carlo all the time. Even Mr, Mrs or Miss Chaloner owns that on this topic "we are brought up against the very objection that many women have to Claret, since they find its lack of sweetness distasteful . . . Most women begin with a marked preference for wines that are frankly sweet (so do boys), or perhaps *demi-sec*, and there is a touch of austerity about Claret that makes them long frankly, or privately, to add a little sugar to the glass." Quite so; the feminine education up to dry wines is purely a question of following the prevailing mode and a fresh manifestation of the eternal and servile imitation of man. This is indirectly confirmed by the authoress herself (I will plump for authoress and a hundred to one against author)

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when she adds: "Though the vine flourished long before mankind, and man is believed to have enjoyed its produce as a beverage as long ago as the neolithic period, women are only just beginning to give it their serious attention." "The fault of their ignorance" (an ignorance which is not found in wine-growing countries) is naturally placed "partly at the door of the opposite sex, who in bygone days were only too well pleased with it." Similar reproaches have been levelled against man for his former tyrannical exclusivity in such domains as higher mathematics, marine zoology, coal-mining, boiler-stoking, Rugby football and legislative procedure. It is doubtless theoretically arguable that "women should possess finer palates than men" and be able to detect and eliminate corked bottles when decanted—what time their husbands are presumably peeling potatoes or scolding the cook. But this is by no means the only preliminary to wining claimed for them. "Where the hostess, or even women-servants, take over the duties of cork-drawing, it is of real help to use a mechanical cork-screw." At first blush one feels inclined to say "amen" to this, but on second thoughts it seems brutally unfair that, if men are

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allowed to draw corks with ordinary corkscrews (which being far simpler and more satisfactory are usually preferred by them), women should be debarred from the same male privilege. To provide women with patent corkscrews is clearly to treat them as inferiors. Sex equality is no better than a hollow mockery if such unsporting handicaps are to be allowed to remain, or the hostess's anxious concentration in studying the grammar of "the international language" of the wine-list is to be flurried by idle male gossip.

There is a singular propriety in women arrogating to themselves the right to choose wines and lay down cellars "like men" in an age in which so many of them lack the ability to boil an egg. Yet "venturing into her cellar without a candle" the mistress of the house is told that she ought to know how to distinguish Bordeaux from Burgundy or Hock bottles by the exercise of that very tactile sense which now so often fails her in sewing on a button. "In a well-known women's club" Miss Chaloner was recently scandalised to find that the head-waitress, when asked for some Beaune, had not "even the vaguest notion whether to look for Claret or Burgundy, or even whether the wine asked for was white or

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red." This pained surprise I am not polite enough to pretend to share. "However, a discreetly dropped hint that the contour of Burgundy and Bordeaux bottles was different . . . began an interest and education that doubled the value of the maid to the members of the club."—From which it might almost be conjectured that the education in question was imparted to the members by the maid. When so many prominent judges, divines, scientists, Cabinet Ministers, university professors and thoughtful clubmen eagerly follow every passing change in the design of "Camiknicks," it is melancholy to be told that "wines . . . are seldom appreciated or used to the best advantage in women's clubs."

Is there a last lingering doubt in the heart of the vinously educated hostess as to the propriety of offering her guests wine—a moral, an æsthetic, not a social perplexity, of course—it is soon allayed. "In the hands of the discriminating hostess, wine has the charm, the kindly welcome of the hearth to which she invites her guests, and if possessing in careless, or stupid use, some dangers, that is not a reason for banishing HER cellar. The hostess who . . . still hesitates over so grave a problem as the ethical values of

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wine"—previously, no doubt, learnedly and exhaustively debated at her club: perhaps the very one where the headwaitress did not know Big Tree from Wonga-Wonga—"may yet take much comfort to heart." But where does the model hostess's husband dine on these occasions, since he has no longer a cellar of his own, or even a key to his wife's? There is at least one occasion mentioned on which we may be quite sure that he would contrive to find a sufficient excuse for absenting himself to "the tyrant," or even brave "the brute's" wrath by taking French leave—when she "might desire to give her dinner a special character, reminiscent of a particular occasion, or holiday in Italy"; in which case, "she would have no difficulty in confining the choice of her wine-list to Italian wines." Perhaps, too, the cigars (which in spite of the practical protests of Madame Hanska and George Sand have been allowed to remain a male monopoly for far too long) would be those delicious curling Minghettis? Italian wines are often excellent in Italy, when served with Italian cooking, but the prevailing quality of "what the vintners sell" in what ladies call "those funny little continental shops in Soho" (for Italian wines are not

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generally obtainable elsewhere), under the fair names of Chianti, Barolo, Cortese, Orvieto, Asti Spumante, etc., is enough to make the most chicken-hearted Fabian husband rebel.

In the future wine is likely once more to be considered, even in non-viticultural countries, as a FOOD essential to physical and moral well-being, rather than as a dangerous artificial stimulant, or the sybaritic indulgence of a few eccentric old epicures. In cultured epochs wine is sure to be held in honour as an integral part of taste, while spirits are certain to reign supreme in barbarous, philistine and sanctimonious centuries, whether permitted or proscribed by the law. The present renaissance of gastronomy in England, hesitant though it still is, is of happy augury for marking the eclipse of an age likely to be identified by future social historians with the perpetual swilling of whisky-and-soda by otherwise refined and self-respecting people; and as heralding the advent of an era in which wine will be purer, better, cheaper, more abundant and varied in its kinds, besides being more justly and intelligently appreciated by the nation at large. With the increasing shortage of cereals throughout the world, the making of grain-spirits

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will soon become indefensible, and the same consideration may ultimately apply to beer as well.

The survival of wine and male dominance, are, as Scandinavia has shown us, parallel issues. If wine survives feminism, which, in spite of the foregoing instances of its latest manifestation, is much more likely to be œnophobe than œnophil, there will be no place left for teetotal Puritanism in a wine-loving world.

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Bacchus, when yet a child, fared one day along an unfamiliar desert path strewn with the bleaching bones of all manner of birds and beasts that had perished there of drought. Wearied, he sat himself down to rest on a heap of stones amidst a solitary patch of verdure growing by the wayside. He found the rambling shrub, the tender leaves of which cooled and caressed his bruised and heated feet, so green and gracious that he pulled it up by the roots so as to take it home with him and plant it in his garden. Fearing lest it might wither under the scorching rays of the sun as he bore it in his hands, he picked up a bird's skull and put the roots, with a little earth, into the hollow of the beak. The plant

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grew so fast while he wended his way homewards that its roots soon outgrew the prison of their narrow sheath. Thereupon he imbedded the bird's skull in the shoulder-blade of a lion. Nevertheless the roots began once again to overspread their allotted trough, so that he had recourse to the expedient of thrusting the lion's shoulder-blade into the jaw-bone of an ass. When, at length, he reached home and went to plant the strange wild shrub in his garden, he found it impossible to extricate the knotted roots from the three bones incasing them ; so he planted it just as it was, bones and all. The vine, for such was the name he gave this goodly creeping plant, throve luxuriantly and bore the young god, who tended and pruned the holy tree lovingly, tressing its branches into a shady arbour, an abundance of heavy bloom-dusted grape-clusters, both purple and golden : the juice of which he pressed and gave to the sons of men for their sustenance and comfort in sickness and adversity and to make glad their hearts on high festivals and days of family rejoicing. And, behold, as soon as the sons of men first tasted the blood of the grape—which they straightway called wine, meaning a sacred water—a prodigy came to pass !

BACCHUS

For when they began to drink they sang as do the birds of the forest ; when they drank more they became strong and courageous as lions ; but when they drank yet more, they grew foolish as jackasses.

Thus it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be.

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